

Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Resource for Child Day Care Providers

What Is Lead Poisoning?

- Lead poisoning is a preventable disease caused by exposure to environmental lead found in lead-based paint, dust, soil, and water.
- It can damage a child's neurological, cognitive, and behavioral development, with irreversible effects.
- **Irony: Nearly all of the lead in our environment, we put there!**



What Causes Childhood Lead Poisoning?

- Lead poisoning usually occurs when children ingest dust that contains lead. Children also eat paint chips or soil that contains lead.
- Lead-based paint was banned for use on housing in 1978. Therefore, homes built before that date may contain lead-based paint. Lead-based paint that is chipping and peeling can produce lead dust, which is very dangerous to children.

Why Do I Need To Know About Lead Poisoning?

- You may have lead based paint in your home or your center.
- You are in a position to improve the environment of children under your care and to advise their parents about the dangers of lead exposure.

Where Is Lead Found?

- Lead paint may be found on many surfaces, such as walls, doors, doorframes, windows (wells and sills), woodwork, railings, fences, porches, and stairs.
- Soil and dust can become contaminated with lead. Contaminated soil can be tracked indoors. Children should not play in bare-soil areas that may contain lead.
- Food that is grown in contaminated soil or near buildings painted with lead-based paint may contain lead. Food packaged in imported cans with lead solder seams may also contain lead.
- Water may become contaminated by lead in water pipes, plumbing fittings made of brass or bronze, or lead solder used to connect water pipes (banned in 1986).
- Some ethnic and home remedies and imported cosmetics may contain lead.



What Can I Do To Prevent Lead Poisoning Of Children In My Care?

- Child care facilities (in the home and in a center) must meet Connecticut guidelines for lead-safe environments. The Connecticut Child Day Care Licensing Unit and your local health department will provide information on inspections and assist you with plans of correction for your facility. Obtaining and maintaining a day care license rests heavily upon compliance with these laws. Contact one of the numbers listed below for more information.

How Does Nutrition Aid In Decreasing Lead Absorption?

- Lead fools the body into thinking it is iron, calcium, or zinc. This makes the body absorb more lead into the bloodstream.
- Offer children foods high in iron, calcium, and zinc.
- Offer children foods high in vitamin C because it helps the body absorb iron better.
- Offer children fewer high-fat foods. These may increase the absorption of lead.
- Lead is absorbed more quickly on an empty stomach.



How Can I Advise Parents?



- Have children tested for lead poisoning at 1 and 2 years of age.
- Feed children foods high in calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin C.
- Keep children away from potentially leaded environments—at home and at play.

Who Can I Call? Resources for Child Care Providers

Connecticut Department of Public Health
Lead Poisoning Prevention & Control Program

860-509-7745

or

860-509-7299

Day Care Licensing Unit

860-509-8045

[http://www.dph.state.ct.us/brs/lead/
lead_program.htm](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/brs/lead/lead_program.htm)

